195 /4/ Such are the proverbs of the people. They do not quote them sep-
538 arately using them only to illuminate or lend color to some passage in their speech. And they use them to a greater extent than the generally known proverbs.

Wanderers, youths who, as blacksmiths or millers or soldiers, have been to the city, bring back with them from there some slang sayings, such as "Are we going on foot or by sewing-machine?", or "Good-day to you, glad to see," etc. The other youths learn these sayings from them, and whereas this certainly gives them a certain amount of interest, especially in the eyes of the girls, the sayings do not become an integral part of their folk heritage, but die out in a few years.

Our less long-winded city "jokes," to which the daily newspapers treat us every day, are almost entirely unknown to them. They do take up one or two of the anecdotes of the calendars which are particularly applicable to them.

On the other hand, the various types of proverbs and anecdotes form a significant part of their everyday speech. In fact, their use is a sign of assimilation into the group, and of efforts made in that
[54] direction. The region of Tolna and Baranya where I collected my materials is an area of mixed nationality. Those Germans who are being assimilated or who are sympathetic use these forms consciously. This consciousness is evident even in their facial expressions and tone of voice, until complete assimilation has occurred. The use or avoidance of these forms is a measure of the blending and in-feeling or of the extent to which they are set apart, respectively, of the railroad men and factory workers living in the villages.

The frontier of the literary awareness of the people is found in approximately this region. Everything mentioned so far is incidental
• 539 to the everyday speech of the people. But the following, still modest anecdote is told for the prupose of providing entertainment. (Told by József Ács, farmer of Gerényes, Baranya county, aged 63.)

King Mátyás one day assigned his engineers to measure Mt. Gellért, to see how many bushels it would make. He gave them a month's measuring, that is a month's time; otherwise he would strip them of their diplomas, or ranks, if they could not measure it.

On the last day, as they went to measure, they met a gipsy. Of course, their hopes were lost. Said the gipsy: "Hey, gentlemen, give me a little piece of a cigar."

The chief engineer said to him: "As though we were in the mood to smoke cigars! Not that we have any cigars!"

So he said: "What is bothering the gentlemen that they are so 539
sad; perhaps I could help."

The chief engineer brought himself to tell the gipsy of the task that King Mátyás had assigned to them.

The gipsy said: "But, gentlemen, the whole thing is simple. Tell King Mátyás that if the bushel were larger than the mountain, then it wouldn't even make one."

Now, of course, there appeared not only pieces of cigars but even whole cigars.

The chief engineer reported to King Mátyás that they had finished with the measuring.

/5/ "Well, if you have finished, tell me how many bushels it makes."

Said the chief engineer: "Your majesty, if the bushel were larger than the mountain, it wouldn't even make one."

"Well, I know that you learned this from some gipsy."

Such an anecdote has an independent existence. There are, of course, external conditions for its presentation (congenial company for some protracted period, etc.). Riddles exist almost entirely in this form.

The external signs of consciousness are visible to the eye, and 538
they could be an indication of the artistic value of what is to be re- 195
counted. Something like "Well, I'll tell one too" is sufficient introduction for posing a riddle or telling an anecdote. Story-telling requires care in laying the groundwork. The story-teller must be called and asked to tell a story. The child, too, asks for a story. Sometimes there exists only this external circumstance: that the mood requires a story. And if at such a time there is not a professional story-teller in the company, then the one who can do so best, tells the story.

The most restricted literary form of the folk epic is the ballad. 538
In addition to its inner rigidities, its outer form is fixed, too. The groundwork for this must be laid with even greater care than for the story. But it is as though the wind of culture had already swept away this literary form. Only on the rarest occasions is there that elevated mood which is necessary for the singing of ballads. Some old men [533]
and women do know very beautiful ballads, but they sing them only on the rarest occasions. Sometimes at a festival or a wedding feast they ask an old singer to sing some old songs, and then he will sing some ballads too, but always solo. As far as my memory serves me, they have never sung ballads in chorus in this region.

The texts of folk customs are classed mostly as lyrical, and